

July 11, 2016

The Honorable Tom Wheeler, Chairman
Federal Communications Commission
445 12th Street, S.W.
Washington, DC 20554

Dear Chairman Wheeler:

As representatives of states with significant agricultural activity, we share the goal of ensuring that access to high-quality communications networks in rural America remains a top priority for the Commission.

More than ever before, U.S. farmers and ranchers are demanding reliable, high-speed mobile broadband services. Mobility is essential for new precision agriculture technologies to deliver productivity gains and environmental sustainability. These technologies are transforming U.S. agriculture as American farmers and ranchers seek to feed, fuel, and clothe an ever-increasing global population using limited land, water, and other resources.

We applaud the Commission's recent decision to allow rate-of-return carriers to access support for "standalone" broadband facilities. This step will help encourage carriers to deploy modern broadband-capable wireline networks in rural areas. Importantly, this is necessary as consumers increasingly rely on wireless services and are "cutting the cord" to shift away from wireline voice, and soaring mobile broadband relies on sufficient backhaul, often provided by these wireline networks. Going forward, sufficient support must also be available to preserve and expand mobile voice and broadband.

Significant work remains to ensure that broadband services are available in rural America and reasonably comparable to services enjoyed in urban areas. Simply stated, broadband, particularly high-speed mobile broadband, is not readily available in many rural areas or could be at risk absent the right policies and support through the Universal Service Fund (USF). While progress has been made in the deployment of broadband, significant portions of rural areas have been left behind. According to the FCC, 87 percent of rural Americans (52.2 million) lack access to mobile broadband with minimum advertised speeds of 10 Mbps/1 Mbps, compared to 45 percent of those living in urban areas.

Without the certainty that essential mobile broadband infrastructure will be deployed and maintained, investments in agricultural productivity will be delayed or bypassed altogether, and the potential efficiencies and benefits to rural communities will be lost. The extension of high-speed mobile and backhaul facilities to agricultural croplands and ranch lands must keep pace

with the ongoing deployment of technology in the field. Increasing numbers of modems in the field means a growing demand for connectivity in the areas in which they operate.

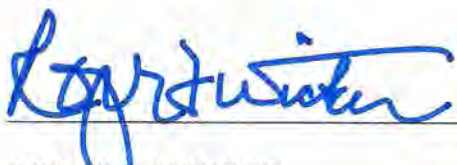
The expansion of rural broadband should be a top priority of federal and state policymakers, as expanded deployment in rural areas will address important economic, educational, health care, and public safety goals. Ongoing USF reform can provide a mechanism for enabling mobile broadband access in rural communities where “people live, work, and travel” that is truly comparable to broadband services provided in urban and suburban areas. To accomplish this goal, USF should support mobile broadband at a minimum of today’s level to close the coverage gap while preserving existing service.

In this regard, we ask you to give special attention as you work to establish Phase II of the USF’s Mobility Fund (MF). Given the importance of mobile services today, the MF should be retained and updated to ensure that funding will promote new mobile broadband deployment in unserved rural and agricultural areas and preserve and upgrade mobile broadband where it is currently available. Importantly, the FCC must rely on realistic measurements of network experience on the ground to determine areas to support.

Croplands and ranch lands have lagged behind in adequate mobile coverage, even as demand for coverage has grown. To address this coverage gap, we urge you to consider a metric of broadband access in croplands (and farm buildings), or some other geographic measurement, in addition to road miles, to identify these areas of greatest need. “Cropland” coverage can be assessed using United States Department of Agriculture data for crop operations, the United States Geological Survey’s Land Use classification, or other databases.

Agriculture is a significant generator of economic activity in our states. We greatly appreciate your efforts to ensure that the latest mobile broadband services are provided to all Americans, including those in agriculture whose livelihoods depend on it.

Sincerely,



ROGER F. WICKER
United States Senator



JOE MANCHIN, III
United States Senator



TAMMY BALDWIN
United States Senator



ROY BLUNT
United States Senator



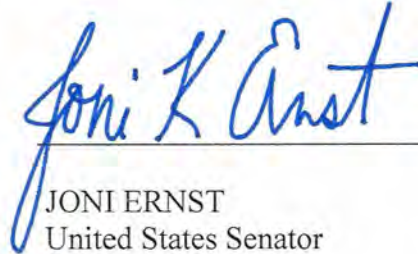
RICHARD BURR
United States Senator



SHELLEY MOORE CAPITO
United States Senator




STEVE DAINES
United States Senator



JONI ERNST
United States Senator



DEB FISCHER
United States Senator



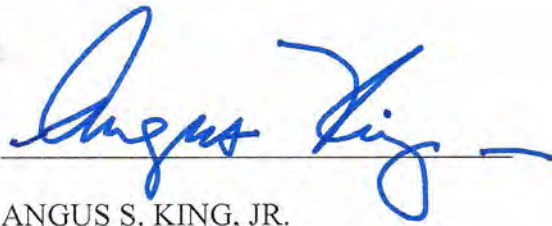
CORY GARDNER
United States Senator



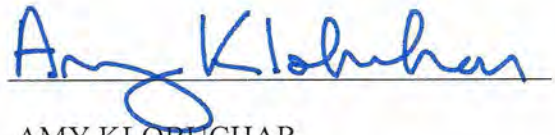
HEIDI HEITKAMP
United States Senator



RON JOHNSON
United States Senator



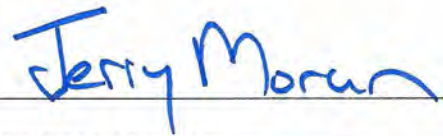
ANGUS S. KING, JR.
United States Senator



AMY KLOBUCHAR
United States Senator



CLAIRE MCCASKILL
United States Senator



JERRY MORAN
United States Senator



GARY PETERS
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PAT ROBERTS
United States Senator



MARCO RUBIO
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DAVID VITTER
United States Senator



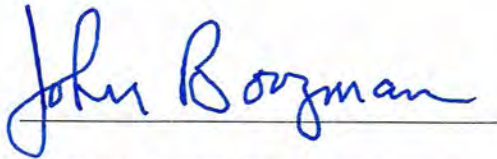
MARK WARNER
United States Senator

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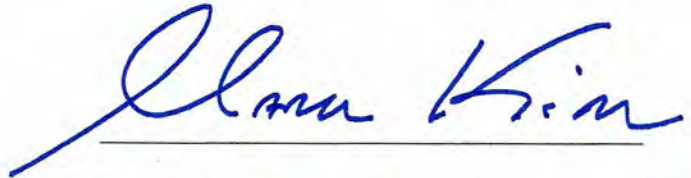
RON WYDEN
United States Senator

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THAD COCHRAN
United States Senator

A handwritten signature in blue ink, reading "John Boozman", positioned above a horizontal line.

JOHN BOOZMAN
United States Senator

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MARK KIRK
United States Senator



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Mark S. Kirk
United States Senate
524 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Kirk:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

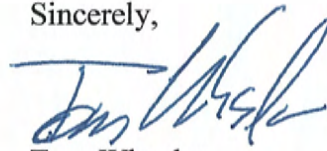
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Going forward, as the Commission considers a Mobility Fund Phase II, we will look to how best maximize limited resources and to promote mobile voice and broadband in areas – including rural communities with agricultural activity – where it might not otherwise be sustained or extended without federal support. For example, the Commission continues to examine the structure and operational details for Phase II, including the proper distribution methodology, eligible geographic areas and providers, and public interest obligations. No decisions have been made on how best to target Mobility Fund Phase II support, but Commission staff is continuing the process of reviewing the record to consider possible next steps for a Mobility Fund Phase II. I am hopeful we will conclude our proceeding by year end.

Page 2—The Honorable Mark S. Kirk

I appreciate your interest and concerns in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Shelley Moore Capito
United States Senate
172 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Capito:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

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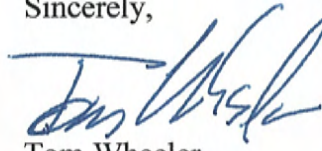
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Richard M. Burr
United States Senate
217 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Burr:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

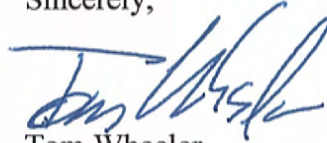
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Tammy Baldwin
United States Senate
717 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Baldwin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

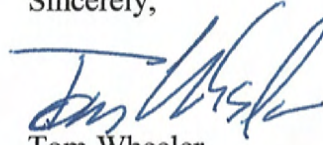
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Roy Blunt
United States Senate
260 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Blunt:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

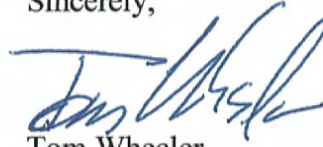
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable John Boozman
United States Senate
141 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Boozman:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

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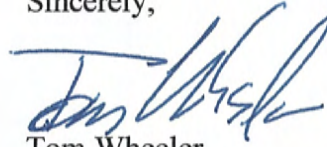
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Page 2—The Honorable John Boozman

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Thad Cochran
United States Senate
113 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Cochran:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

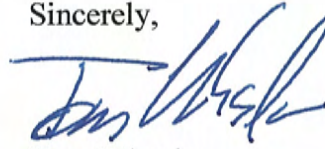
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Steve Daines
United States Senate
320 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Daines:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

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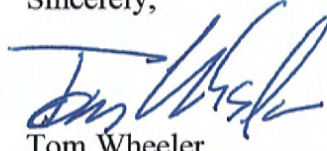
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Joni Ernst
United States Senate
111 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Ernst:

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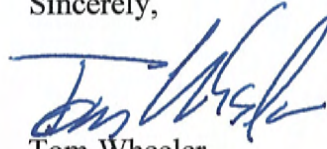
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WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Deb Fischer
United States Senate
454 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Fischer:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

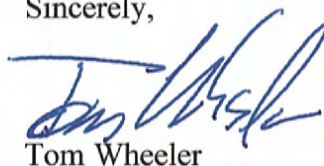
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Page 2—The Honorable Deb Fischer

I appreciate your interest and concerns in this matter. Please let me know if I can be of any further assistance.

Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Cory Gardner
United States Senate
354 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Gardner:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

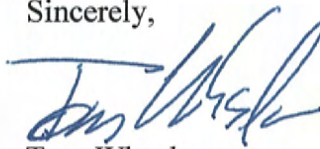
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Heidi Heitkamp
United States Senate
110 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Heitkamp:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

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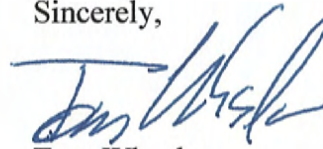
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Ron Johnson
United States Senate
328 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Johnson:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

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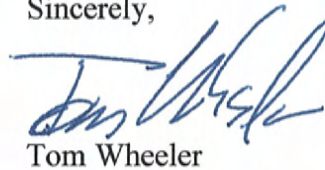
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Angus King
United States Senate
133 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator King:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

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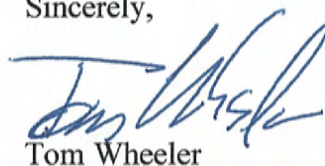
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Amy Klobuchar
United States Senate
302 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Klobuchar:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

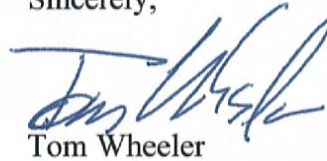
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Joe Manchin
United States Senate
306 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Manchin:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

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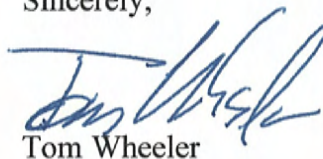
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Claire McCaskill
United States Senate
730 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator McCaskill:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

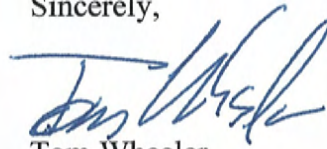
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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Jerry Moran
United States Senate
521 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Moran:

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Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

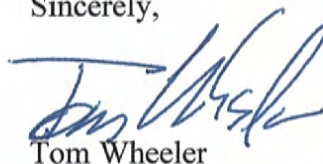
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Gary Peters
United States Senate
724 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Peters:

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Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

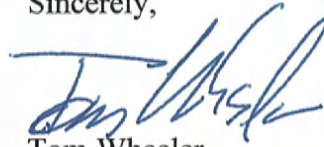
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OFFICE OF
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Pat Roberts
United States Senate
109 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Roberts:

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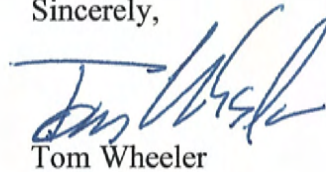
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Marco Rubio
United States Senate
284 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Rubio:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

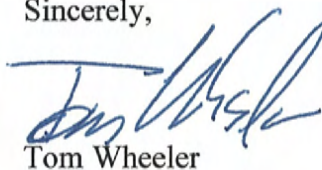
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Sincerely,

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Tom Wheeler



OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Thom Tillis
United States Senate
185 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Tillis:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

Americans rely more and more on mobile broadband service. As providers roll-out more robust wireless networks, they are providing greater broadband speeds, efficiency, capacity, and a wealth of innovative features. The Commission is committed to ensuring that Americans living and working in rural areas have access to these mobile broadband networks that are increasingly essential for full participation in today's society and economy.

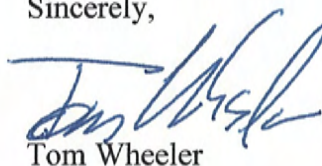
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OFFICE OF
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable David Vitter
United States Senate
516 Hart Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Vitter:

Thank you for your letter regarding the importance of mobile broadband networks to support agriculture and rural America, as well as your views regarding the opportunity that a Mobility Fund Phase II may provide in achieving that goal.

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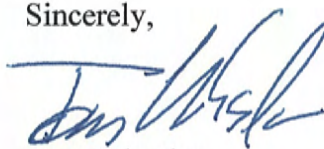
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OFFICE OF
THE CHAIRMAN

FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Mark Warner
United States Senate
475 Russell Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Warner:

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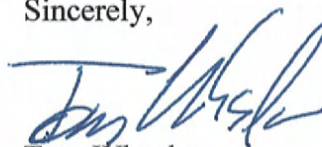
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OFFICE OF
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FEDERAL COMMUNICATIONS COMMISSION
WASHINGTON

September 14, 2016

The Honorable Roger Wicker
United States Senate
555 Dirksen Senate Office Building
Washington, D.C. 20510

Dear Senator Wicker:

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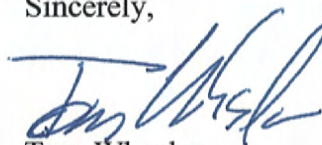
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September 14, 2016

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United States Senate
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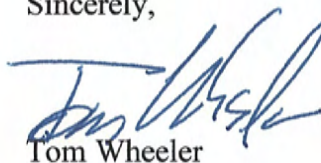
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